
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Raleigh Regulatory Field Office
6508 Falls of Neuse Road, Suite 120
Raleigh, North Carolina 27615-6814
(Web page - <http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/wetlands/index.htm>)

Action ID No. 200020569

May 7, 2003

PUBLIC NOTICE

The NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS (NCDOT), 1548 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548, has applied for a Department of the Army (DA) Permit pursuant to SECTION 404 OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT to authorize the proposed discharge of discharge fill material, impacting waters of the United States, including WETLANDS and STREAMS, for construction of IMPROVEMENTS TO SR 1158 (AIRPORT BOULEVARD) (T.I.P. No. U-3823), crossing BLOOMERY SWAMP and an unnamed tributary, and adjacent wetlands, from NC 42 west to US 264, west of Wilson, in WILSON COUNTY, North Carolina.

BACKGROUND:

The social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with reasonable and feasible build alternatives for this project have been described in a NCDOT/Federal Highway Administration Environmental Assessment (EA) dated September 6, 2002.

The EA identifies six construction alternatives to be studied in detail. The Mass Transportation and "No Build" alternatives are also discussed in the EA. By Concurrence Form dated May 15, 2002, the Corps of Engineers agreed with the six construction alternatives to be studied in detail.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The following description of work is taken from data provided by the applicant and from observations made during on-site inspections by a representative of the Corps of Engineers. The six proposed build alternatives are described below. Maps showing the location of the project are included with this public notice.

NCDOT proposes to widen SR 1158 (Airport Boulevard) to a five-lane facility, from NC 42 west to US 264, a distance of approximately two miles. Only four lanes of roadway would be constructed in the vicinity of the Bloomery Swamp crossing, to minimize impacts to wetlands.

A "sealed crossing" would be installed at the railroad crossing north of Bloomery Swamp, including gates, signal flashers, and a concrete barrier in the median. Several new turn lanes are also proposed.

Three different proposals for extending or replacing the existing box culvert at Bloomery Swamp are being studied. Each crossing alternative has two alternatives for stormwater management, either shoulder drains, or curb and gutter drainage, for a total of six alternatives. Alternatives 1 and 2 propose extension of the existing five-barrel box culvert, and addition of five equalizer pipes through the existing causeway to expand the reach of floodwaters throughout the wetland system. Alternatives 3 and 4 propose to replace the existing culvert with a 200 foot long bridge to enhance the reach of the Bloomery Swamp floodwaters throughout the wetland system, and to provide adequate surface flows to the highest quality wetlands in the system. Alternatives 5 and 6 propose to replace the existing culvert with a 475 foot long bridge to completely span the contiguous wetlands on the southwest side of the Bloomery Swamp crossing, and to equalize the acreage of wetlands impacted and wetlands restored by removal of the culvert and causeway. Alternatives 1, 3 and 5 propose use of shoulder drains. Alternatives 2, 4 and 6 propose use of curb and gutter.

The wetlands that would be impacted by the project are riparian bottomland hardwood wetlands adjacent to Bloomery Swamp and an unnamed tributary. Wetland and stream impact sites by alternative are designated in the following table.

Impacts by alternative are as follows:

	Alts. 1 & 2	Alts. 3 & 4	Alts. 5 & 6
Bloomery Swamp stream impacts	36 linear feet	0 linear feet	0 linear feet
Unnamed tributary stream impacts	87 linear feet	87 linear feet	87 linear feet
Total stream impacts	123 linear feet	87 linear feet	87 linear feet
Bloomery Swamp wetland impacts	0.73 acre	*0.80 acre	**0.50 acre
Unnamed tributary wetland impacts	0.004 acre	0.004 acre	0.004 acre
Total wetland impacts	0.734 acre	0.804 acre	0.504 acre

* Note: In these alternatives, 0.14 acre of wetlands would be restored through causeway removal for a net impact of 0.66 acre.

** Note: In these alternatives, 0.50 acre of wetlands would be restored through causeway removal for a net impact of 0.0 acre.

In order to more fully integrate Section 404 permit requirements with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and to give careful consideration to our required public interest review and 404 (b)(1) compliance determination, the Corps of Engineers is soliciting public comment on the merits of the proposal and on the alternatives evaluated in the EA. At the close of this comment period, the District Engineer will evaluate and consider the comments received as well as the expected adverse and beneficial impacts of the proposed road construction

to select the least environmentally damaging, practicable alternative (LEDPA). The District Engineer is not authorizing construction of the Airport Boulevard improvements at this time. A final Department of the Army permit could be issued, if at all, only after our review process is complete, impacts to the aquatic environment have been minimized to the maximum extent practicable, and a compensatory mitigation plan has been approved.

NCDOT has no specific plan at this time to provide compensatory mitigation for the unavoidable impacts to wetlands and streams associated with this project.

According to the EA, the purpose of the proposed project is to improve capacity and safety along this section of SR 1158 (Airport Boulevard).

Functional design plans and the EA are available for review at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Field Office at 6508 Falls of Neuse Road, Suite 120; Raleigh, North Carolina 27615-6846.

NCDOT is holding an open-house public hearing for this project on May 1, 2003, at the James B. Hunt High School at 4559 Lamm Road, west of Wilson. A Corps of Engineers representative will be at the hearing.

The State of North Carolina will review this public notice to determine the need for the applicant to obtain any required State authorization. No Department of the Army permit will be issued until the coordinated State viewpoint on the proposal has been received and reviewed by this agency, nor will a Department of the Army permit be issued until the North Carolina Division of Water Quality has determined the applicability of a Water Quality Certificate as required by PL 92-500.

This application is being considered pursuant to Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Any person may request, in writing within the comment period specified in the notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

The District Engineer has consulted the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places for the presence or absence of registered properties, or properties listed as being eligible for inclusion therein, and the project does not impact any registered property or property listed as being eligible for inclusion in the Register. Consultation of the National Register constitutes the extent of cultural resource investigations by the District Engineer. NCDOT has conducted surveys for architectural and archaeological resources, and has coordinated with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). SHPO has concurred that the project will not have any effect on architectural or archaeological resource properties eligible for inclusion in the Register. The District Engineer is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources. Presently, unknown archeological, scientific, prehistoric, or historical data may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit.

The District Engineer is not aware, based on available information, that the activity will affect species, or their critical habitat, designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts which the proposed activity may have on the public interest requires a careful weighing of all those factors which become relevant in each particular case. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to authorize a proposal, and if so the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur, are therefore determined by the outcome of the general balancing process. That decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving the placement of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria, a permit will be granted unless the District Engineer determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

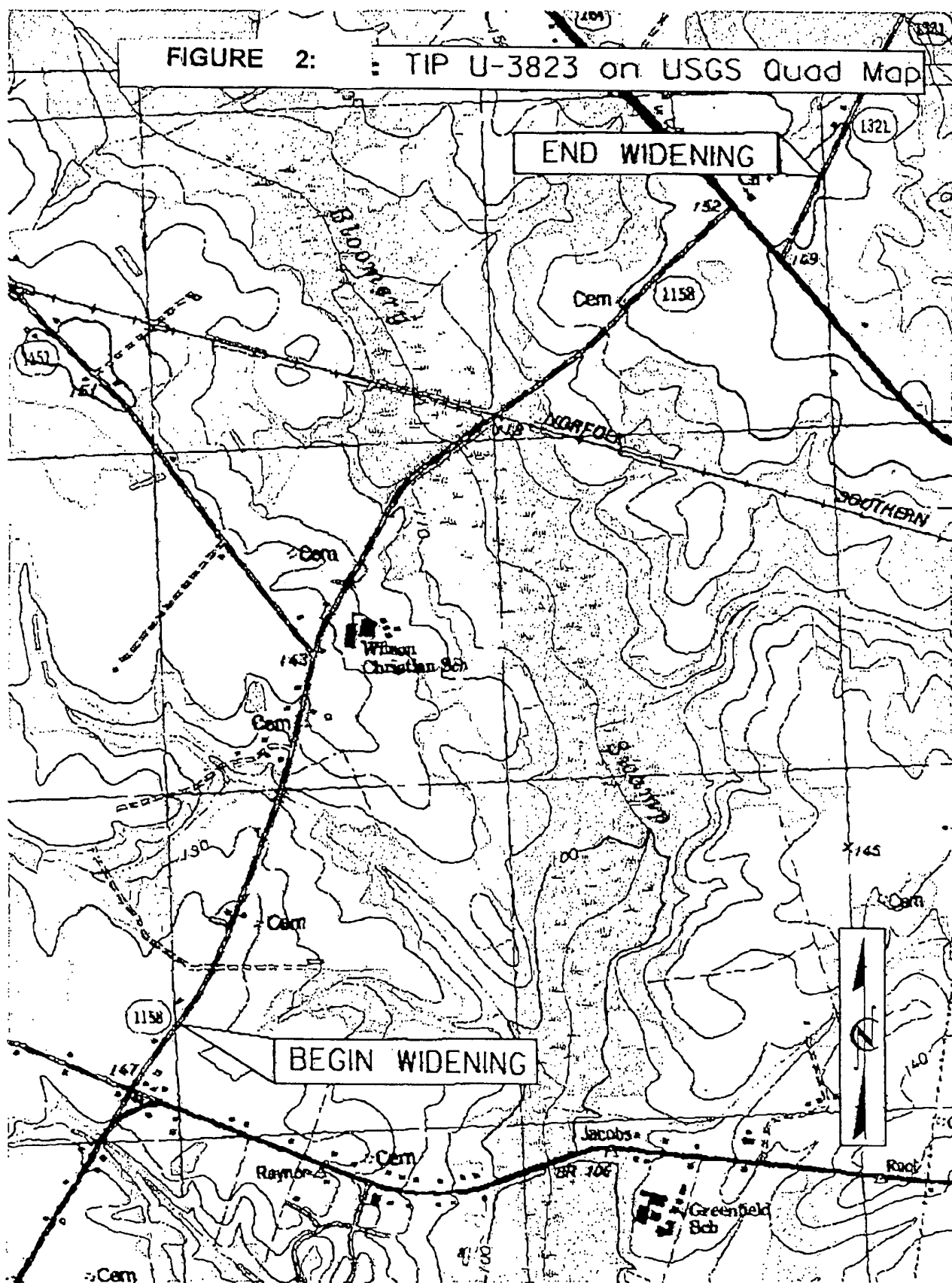
Generally, the decision whether to issue this DA permit will not be made until the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) issues, denies, or waives State certification required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The NCDWQ considers whether or not the proposed activity will comply with Sections 301, 302, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act. The application and this public notice for the DA permit serves as application to the NCDWQ for certification.

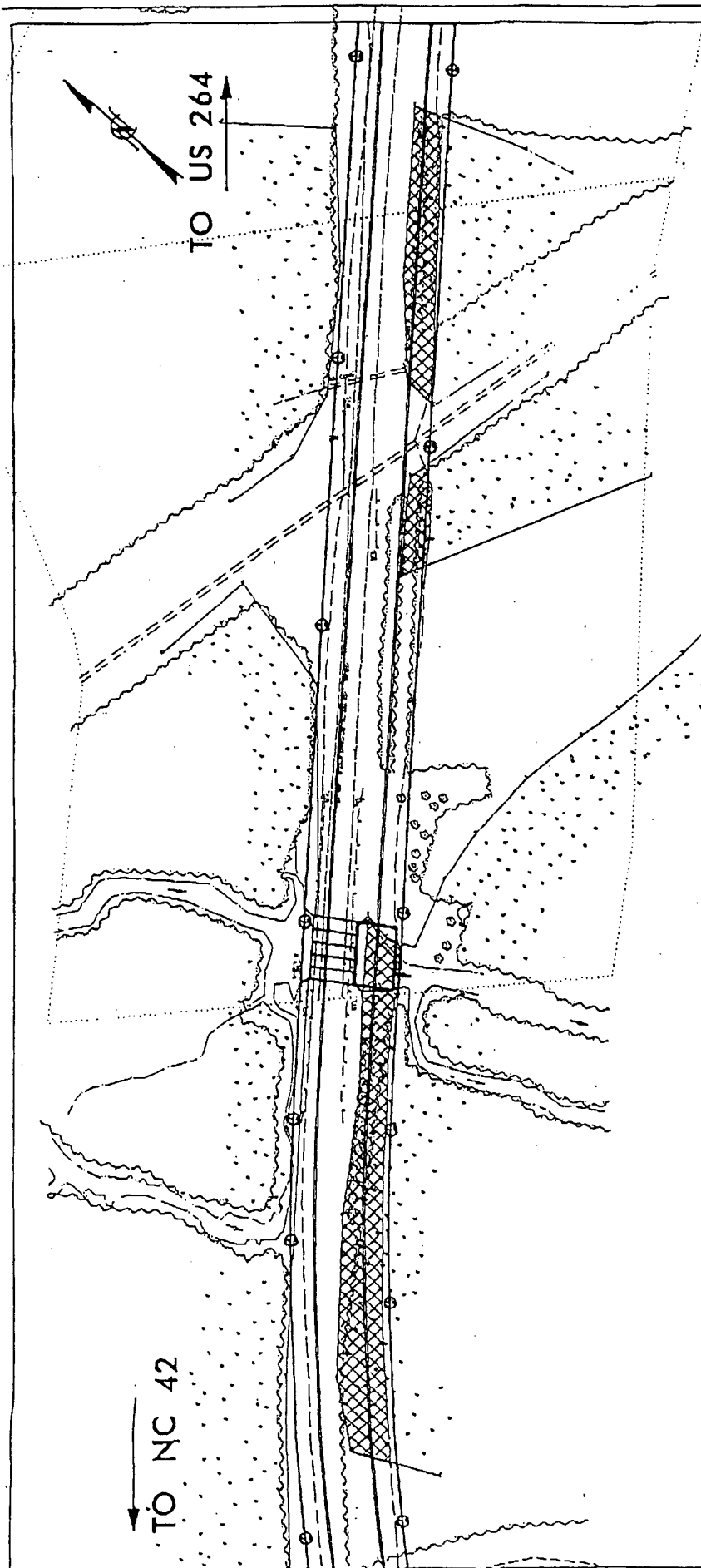
Additional information regarding the Clean Water Act certification may be reviewed at the offices of the Wetlands /401 Unit, North Carolina DENR, Division of Water Quality, 2321 Crabtree Boulevard, Raleigh, North Carolina. Copies of such materials will be furnished to any person requesting copies upon payment of reproduction costs.

All persons desiring to make comments regarding the application for Clean Water Act certification should do so in writing delivered to the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Quality, 1650 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1650, on or before June 6, 2003, Attention: Mr. John Dorney.

Written comments pertinent to the proposed work, as outlined above, will be received in this office, Attention: Eric Alsmeyer, until 4:15 p.m., June 6, 2003, or telephone 919-876-8441, extension 23.

FIGURE 2: TIP U-3823 on USGS Quad Map





GRAPHIC SCALES



PROPOSED PAVEMENT
 PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY
 EXTEND CULVERT
 WETLANDS IMPACTED
 WETLANDS RESTORED
 WETLANDS



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
 DIVISION FOUR DOC

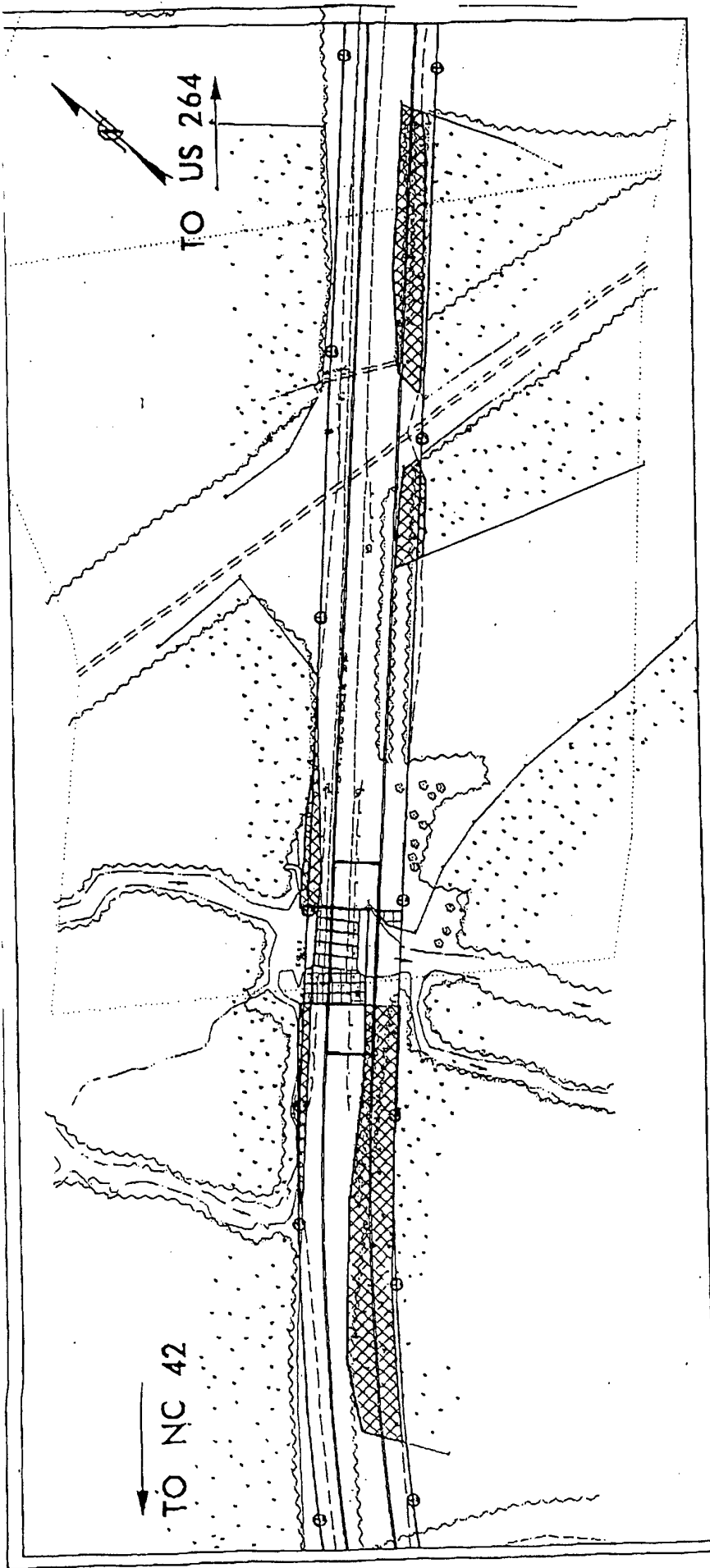
SR 115B (AIRPORT BLVD.)
 FROM NC 42 WEST TO US 264

WILSON COUNTY

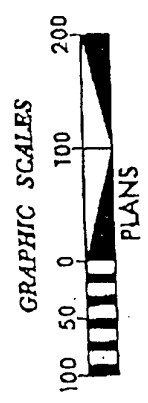
TIP PROJECT U-3B23

FIGURE 3 ALTERNATIVES 1 & 2

CULVERT AT BLOOMERY SWAMP

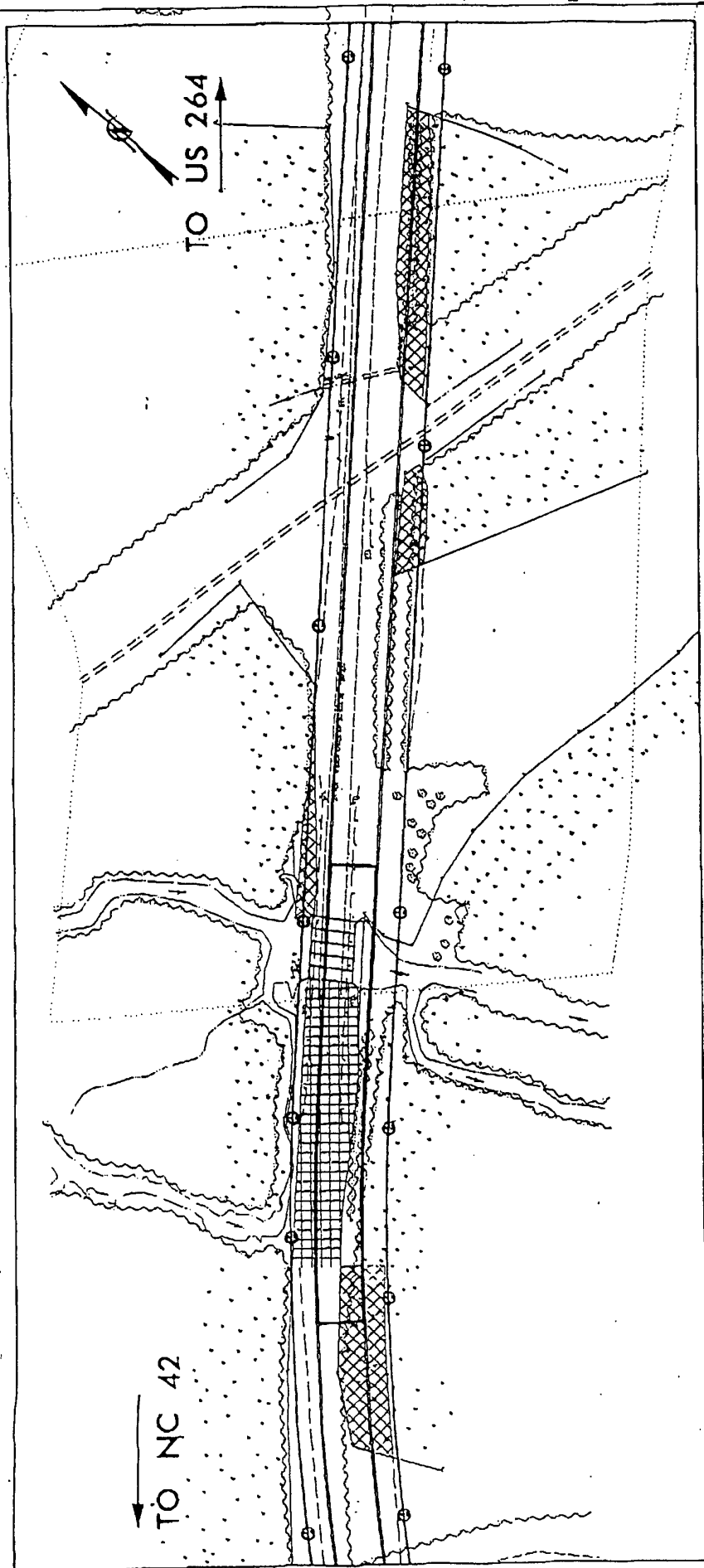


- PROPOSED PAVEMENT
 — PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY
 — 200' BRIDGE
 [Symbol: Box with diagonal lines] WETLANDS IMPACTED
 [Symbol: Box with horizontal lines] WETLANDS RESTORED
 [Symbol: Box with dots] WETLANDS

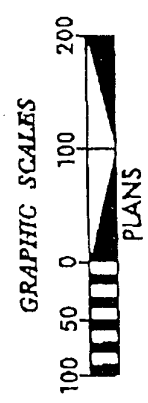


200' BRIDGE AT BLOOMING SWAMP

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
 DIVISION FOUR DDC
 SR 1158 (AIRPORT BLVD.)
 FROM NC 42 WEST TO US 264
 WILSON COUNTY
 TIP PROJECT U-3B23
 FIGURE 4. ALTERNATIVES 3 & 4



- PROPOSED PAVEMENT
 PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY
 475' BRIDGE
 WETLANDS IMPACTED
 WETLANDS RESTORED
 WETLANDS



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
 DIVISION FOUR DSC
 SR 1158 (AIRPORT BLVD.)
 FROM NC 42 WEST TO US 264
 WILSON COUNTY
 TIP PROJECT U-3823
 FIGURE 5 ALTERNATIVES 5 & 6

475' BRIDGE AT BLOOMERY SWAMP